

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 26  
(UNCLASSIFIED VERSION)

US CIVIL DEFENSE POLICY

It is the policy of the United States to enhance the deterrence of strategic nuclear war through a strong and balanced program of strategic forces, including effective capabilities for strategic defense. Civil Defense, along with an effective Continuity of Government program, emergency mobilization, and secure and reconstitutable telecommunications systems, is an essential ingredient of our nuclear deterrent forces. It is a matter of national priority that the US have a Civil Defense program which provides for the survival of the US population.

The Program

Accordingly, I direct that the US Civil Defense program provide an improved basis for dealing with crises and carrying out eventual national recovery. The US Civil Defense program will:

- Enhance deterrence and stability in conjunction with our strategic offensive and other strategic defensive forces. Civil Defense, as an element of the strategic balance, should assist in maintaining perceptions that this balance is favorable to the US.
- Reduce the possibility that the US could be coerced in time of crisis.
- Provide for survival of a substantial portion of the US population in the event of nuclear attack preceded by strategic warning and for continuity of government, should deterrence and escalation control fail.
- Provide an improved ability to deal with natural disasters and other large-scale domestic emergencies.

This policy complements primary US reliance on strategic offensive nuclear forces as the preponderant factor in maintaining deterrence.

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Implementation

To implement the foregoing policies, the President directs that the program consist of three major elements and adhere to the following timetable:

- Population Protection. By the end of 1989, the development of plans and deployment of supporting operational systems will be completed. Primary reliance will be placed upon relocating the population of US metropolitan and other potential high-risk areas to surrounding areas of lower risk during a period of international crisis, taking advantage of extensive US transportation resources.
- Industrial Protection. Analyses and preparations will be completed which will allow a funding decision to be made on a program to protect key defense and population relocation support industries.
- Blast Sheltering. Analyses and preparations will be completed which will allow a funding decision on blast shelters for key industrial workers in defense and population relocation support industries.

These measures will fully support continuity of government, survival and endurance in time of war.

Management

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will have overall operational supervision of this program. Funds for the program will be contained in the FEMA budget. In order to ensure interagency cooperation and support in the program, the Civil Defense Working Group of the Emergency Mobilization Preparedness Board will be responsible for, among other things, assuring coordination between the Civil Defense program and mobilization preparedness actions and programs, and the preparation of semi-annual reports to the President.

*Ronald Reagan*

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